



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

CASE STUDY

Afghan Women Cyber Fight for Rights

USAID's support for new technology allows women to end gender-based discrimination



Photo: USAID/AMDEP/Internews

Participants of the Take Back the Tech! digital storytelling workshop utilize information and communication technologies to unite and empower women.

CHALLENGE Women have severely limited opportunities to education in Afghanistan. Being denied basic educational rights, as well as lacking access to new technologies and innovative communication tools, significantly inhibits progress towards gender equality in Afghanistan. This form of discrimination deafens the voice and opinion of women in civil society.

In a country in need of a national voice, enabling and empowering women to tell their own stories will assist Afghanistan in moving toward a more pluralistic society and advance development goals.

INITIATIVE USAID's Afghanistan Media Development and Empowerment Project (AMDEP) organized the first female tech exchange in Afghanistan called *Take Back the Tech!* This digital storytelling workshop is an international campaign that unites women in utilizing information and communication technologies to end violence against women. During the workshop, participants learned how to use various new and traditional media tools to express themselves and enhance their advocacy efforts to end gender-based discrimination. "New media is not just for journalists," said Parwana from Women Activities and Social Services Association in Herat. "This training will allow us to transfer our voices and pain."

RESULTS The participants produced digital stories chronicling their lives and sharing the joys and challenges women face in Afghanistan. The stories were presented to an audience on March 8, 2012 to pay tribute to International Women's Day. The participants will "take back" the knowledge and lessons learned from the training to apply in their daily work. There will be similar workshops organized at USAID-funded Anaar Multimedia Centers in Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, and Mazar-e-Sharif. This will help foster a network of women who united together will work to end gender-based discrimination through media tools.